



Parent-Teen Homework Assignments to Increase Driver Safety

INFORMATION SHEET FOR HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT #2

KEYS to... Traffic Laws & Courteous Driving

Purpose

To increase the safety of everyone involved, families should ensure that teens have the safety knowledge, skills, & behaviors related to Traffic Laws & Courteous Driving.

- ♦ **Goal for Parent:** Make it clear to your teen that you expect her/him to be a safe driver. For Activity #2, assess your teen's knowledge, skills, & behaviors related to traffic laws & courteous driving.
- ♦ **Goal for Teen:** Fully explain to your parents the concepts & show them the procedures that you have learned in driver education. For Activity #2, show your parents that you have the knowledge, skills, & behaviors for traffic laws & courteous driving.

Instructions

Completing activities may take some time & energy, but the safety impact will be long-lasting!

- ♦ **TOGETHER:** Parents & teens need to: (1) read over this Information Sheet, (2) fully & thoroughly perform the parent-teen activities listed on the Assignment Sheet for Homework Assignment #2, & (3) complete & turn in the Assignment Sheet to your driver education class.
- ♦ **As your family completes the activities, remember to REMAIN PATIENT with each other! This is a new experience for both parents & teens!**

Information for Homework Assignment#2: Traffic Laws

Box A: Obey Signals, Signs, & Lines

Traffic signals, signs, & lines tell drivers what to do & what not to do in the traffic environment.

Signals = respond accordingly

RED means stop; **YELLOW** means slow down & proceed with caution; **GREEN** means go if it is safe.

Regulatory signs = red or white = must do

- ♦ **Stop Signs** = come to a full stop (before the sign or white stop line, not after).
- ♦ **Speed Limit Signs** = maximum or minimum legal speed allowed for ideal conditions.
- ♦ **Lane Use Signs** = which lanes you can use & for what purposes (turn, straight, etc.).
- ♦ **Yield Signs** = slow down & yield the right-of way to traffic and/or pedestrians.
- ♦ **Do Not Enter Signs** = prevent drivers from going the wrong way.

Warning signs = yellow or orange = slow down

- ♦ **Railroad Crossing Signs** = slow down & watch for approaching trains.
- ♦ **Work Area Signs** = slow down & watch for construction sites & maintenance or emergency operations.

Information signs = blue, green, or brown

Pavement lines = yellow or white, solid or broken, & symbols and/or words

- ♦ **Yellow** = separates traffic traveling in opposite directions
- ♦ **White** = separates traffic traveling in same direction
- ♦ **Solid** = do not cross
- ♦ **Broken** = may cross if safe to do so
- ♦ **Symbols or words** = which lanes you can use & for what purposes (e.g., arrows, "right turn only" written on road)

Box B: Obey Driver Behavior Laws

Traffic laws establish orderly patterns of driver behavior to increase EVERYONE'S safety in the traffic environment.

Know right-of-way rules

- ♦ At crosswalks, always yield to pedestrians.
- ♦ At intersections with no traffic controls, yield to vehicles coming from the right.
- ♦ When turning left, yield to oncoming traffic.
- ♦ At 4-way stops, the car reaching the intersection first goes first.
- ♦ Yield the right-of-way to emergency vehicles (e.g., police, ambulance) with sirens and/or lights.

Use seat belts

- ♦ In a crash, seat belts keep you & your passengers inside the vehicle where you are the safest & also keep you from hitting objects or passengers inside the vehicle.

Obey speed limits

- ♦ As speed increases, crash risk increases & crash severity increases.
- ♦ As speed increases, distances necessary to safely follow & stop increase, while the amount of time available to detect & react to unexpected events shortens.
- ♦ Vehicles are more difficult to maneuver at higher speeds. Steering safely around curves or objects is more difficult. Errors such as turning too quickly or braking too sharply can result in an out-of-control vehicle.
- ♦ Driving on high-speed roads increases the likelihood of drivers engaging in aggressive driving behaviors such as tailgating & weaving in & out of traffic.

Never drive under the influence of alcohol or other drugs

- ♦ Drinking any amount of alcohol reduces eye & hand coordination, slows reflexes, blurs vision, & most importantly, impairs judgment.
- ♦ Driving after drinking any amount of alcohol increases the risk of a crash or injury. The more alcohol, the more risk. The risk is even greater for teens because they are inexperienced drivers & inexperienced drinkers.

Box C: Be an Effective Communicator

Roadways are shared by many, including other motorists, cyclists, & pedestrians. Make the traffic environment safer by communicating your intentions.

Communicating with signal lights

Signal lights are used to communicate your intentions to enter or exit traffic, turn, or switch lanes. Turn on signal lights at least 4 seconds prior to turning or changing lanes. Turn off signal lights when you have completed your turn or lane change.

Communicating with brake lights

Tapping your brake lights prior to slowing down can communicate your intentions to slow or stop shortly. This is especially important if the vehicle behind you is too close or going too fast.

Communicating with lane position

The location of your vehicle in your lane can help communicate your intentions to other road users. If you are planning to turn or merge left, in addition to using your turn signal, you should position your car towards the left side of your lane. The same goes for turning or merging right by positioning your car toward the right side of your lane. If you are staying in your lane, you should remain centered in the lane.

Communicating with horn usage

The purpose of the horn is to make your presence known to others that may not be paying attention. Courteous horn usage means using it sparingly & only when necessary. When necessary, tap the horn lightly to get others' attention. Long sustained blasts communicate hostility, anger, or aggression.

Communicating with headlights

You should always use your headlights day & night to make your vehicle more visible to other roadway users. You should especially have your headlights on when your windshield wipers are on. You can also flash your headlights to alert oncoming vehicles of dangerous situations (e.g., a stalled car or wreck).

Box D: Be a Patient Driver

Aggressive driving is very risky, whether you are doing it yourself or someone else is. It can cause crashes—or worse!

What is "aggressive driving"?

It is the operation of a motor vehicle in an unsafe & hostile manner without regard for others. Some examples include speeding, tailgating, weaving through traffic, cutting off other vehicles, or going through red lights & stop signs.

When does aggressive driving happen?

For some, aggressive driving is a habit. For others, it often happens when a driver is frustrated, impatient, or irritable. If impeded or challenged, aggressive drivers sometimes escalate their behavior into **road rage**. This makes it all the more important to avoid aggressive driving & aggressive drivers.

How do you avoid becoming an aggressive driver?

Develop an attitude of patience. Allow plenty of time to reach your destination on schedule. Alter your schedule to avoid driving when roads are most congested. If you are running late, call ahead so you can relax. Do not drive if you are angry, upset, or overly tired. When driving, relax, sit comfortably in your seat, ease your grip on the steering wheel, & do not clench your teeth. Give others the benefit of the doubt. Be polite, courteous, & forgiving.

What should you do if confronted by an aggressive driver?

If you come across an aggressive driver, stay calm & relaxed. Make every attempt to get out of the way. Do not escalate the situation. Do not make eye contact or respond with grimaces, words, or gestures. Ignore any harassing gestures. You can report aggressive drivers to authorities by providing a vehicle & driver description, license plate number, location, & direction of travel. **You can call 911 on your cell phone but pull over first!**

Family Activities to Increase Teen Driver Safety: For Now & In the Future

Families should complete parent-teen homework assignments to assess teen knowledge & practice of driver safety.

For Homework Assignment #2, teens will discuss with parents:

- ♦ The meanings of various signals & signs, & the importance of being a courteous driver
- ♦ The correct use of signal lights, brake lights, & lane positions for courtesy & communication

Families should talk about driver safety OFTEN.

Parents & teens should discuss the following:

- ☐ **The importance of always obeying traffic laws**
 - The importance of obeying all traffic control devices (signals, signs, & lines)
 - The importance of using seat belts for driver & all passengers
 - The importance of driving within the speed limits
 - The risks related to using alcohol or other drugs & driving OR riding with a driver who used alcohol/ drugs
 - The importance of calling home if you cannot get home safely (Parent will arrange a safe ride home)
- ☐ **The importance of being a courteous driver**
 - The importance of communicating with other road users
 - The risks related to aggressive driving & road rage
 - The need for a patient driving attitude

Families should set expectations for driver safety EARLY.

MAKE CLEAR that teens are expected to:

- ☐ **Obey all traffic laws, including:**
 - Obey all traffic control devices (signals, signs, & lines)
 - Wear seatbelt as driver & have all passengers wear seat belts
 - Drive within posted speed limits
 - Never use alcohol or other drugs
 - Never ride with a driver who has used alcohol or other drugs
 - Call home if you cannot get home safely
- ☐ **Be a courteous driver, including:**
 - Use signal lights, brake lights, & lane position for communication
 - Never show aggressive driving or respond to other's aggressive driving

MAKE CLEAR that teens who violate safety expectations will:

- ☐ Lose driving privileges for _____ - _____ (write in amount of time)
- ☐ Other: _____ (write in what & amount of time)



Parent-Teen Homework Assignments to Increase Driver Safety

ASSIGNMENT SHEET FOR HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT #2

Traffic Laws & Courteous Driving

Date:

Student:

Parent:

Phone number:

Instructions

Together, parent & teen need to: (1) read over the Information Sheet for Homework Assignment #2, (2) fully & thoroughly perform the parent-teen activities listed on this Assignment Sheet, & (3) complete & turn in this Assignment Sheet to your driver education class.

- ♦ **Materials needed:** Parent, teen, this assignment sheet, **Do You Know Your Signs** handout, pencil or pen, & vehicle.
- ♦ **Time needed:** Each activity can take 10-30 minutes & can be done separately, at different times.
- ♦ **Directions:** After completing each activity, check (☑) the box to show that it was completed & then parent rates teen's performance as "good," "fair," or "needs improvement." No matter what the rating, please list comments about teen's performance to help us keep track.
- ♦ **Grading:** Grading of Homework Assignment #2 is based **ONLY on completing the activities, not on the actual ratings for teen progress**. Thus, a "needs improvement" rating will not lower your teen's grade. This information is important for tracking student progress & we providing you with feedback for ways to improve.
- ♦ **Driving Activities:** For the activities that involve driving, parent should drive so teen can focus on the activity & write down answers. If teen drives, parent will need to write down the answers that teen gives.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Activities for Traffic Laws (Use info from Boxes A & B on the Information Sheet)	Rating (☑) NI = Needs Improvement			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Family Exercise: Do You Know Your Signs? To assess knowledge, use the Do You Know Your Signs handout. With it, parent points to signs or calls out numbers & teen reports each of the following. Parent checks accuracy using the answers on the back of the handout.	Good	Fair	NI	Comments
<input type="checkbox"/>	What the shape & color of the sign means (by the category of sign--regulatory, warning, or informational)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	What the specific sign means	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Driving Activity: Signs. To assess skill, parent drives a predetermined route while teen sits in the front passenger seat & (1) points out & counts examples of the following & (2) writes down examples of the following.	Good	Fair	NI	Comments
<input type="checkbox"/>	Regulatory signs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Count (use hash marks):				
	Examples (write down the ones you saw):				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Warning signs (includes railroad & construction signs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Count (use hash marks):				
	Examples (write down the ones you saw):				
<input type="checkbox"/>	Informational signs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Count (use hash marks):				
	Examples (write down the ones you saw):				

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Family Discussion: Traffic Laws. To assess knowledge, teen tells parent about each of the following. Parent checks accuracy using information from Boxes A & B on the Information Sheet	Good	Fair	NI	Comments
<input type="checkbox"/>	The various right-of-way rules	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	The importance of seat belt use	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	The importance of obeying speed limits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	The risks related to using alcohol or other drugs & driving OR riding with a driver who used alcohol or drugs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Activities for Courteous Driving (Use info from Boxes C & D on the Information Sheet)	Rating (<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>) NI = Needs Improvement			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Family Discussion: Courteous Driving. To assess knowledge, teen tells parent about each of the following. Parent checks accuracy using information from Boxes C & D on the Information Sheet	Good	Fair	NI	Comments
<input type="checkbox"/>	The importance of being a courteous driver	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	The problems with aggressive driving	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	How to communicate with other road users using: signal lights, brake lights, lane positions, & horn	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Driving Activity: Driver Communication. To assess skill, parent drives a predetermined route while teen sits in the front passenger seat OR family parks in a busy parking lot or near a busy intersection & teen (1) points out & counts examples of the following & (2) writes down examples of the following.	Good	Fair	NI	Comments
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other drivers communicating with signal lights	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<u>Correct Use</u> Count (use hash marks): Examples (write down the ones you saw):	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<u>Incorrect Use</u> Count (use hash marks): Examples (write down the ones you saw):	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other drivers communicating with brake lights	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<u>Correct Use</u> Count (use hash marks): Examples (write down the ones you saw):	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<u>Incorrect Use</u> Count (use hash marks): Examples (write down the ones you saw):	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other drivers communicating with lane position	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<u>Correct Use</u> Count (use hash marks): Examples (write down the ones you saw):	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<u>Incorrect Use</u> Count (use hash marks): Examples (write down the ones you saw):	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	